

Strength Training for Seniors

As people get older, we begin to lose muscle mass and related strength, and lose bone density. This can often lead to decreased independence and put us at higher risks for falls as we age. This also contributes to the stereotype that getting older means becoming frailer. This is simple not true, if people take few easy steps, then our senior years can be filled with vitality.

The answer may be found with iron. We have all heard of taking iron, but what we need is to “pump some iron.” That is, we need to consider doing some sort of strength training program. Many of the effects some people accept as an unavoidable part of getting older, actually, can be reversed or at least diminished. Strength training can help improve strength and muscle mass. This in turn puts seniors at less risk for falling. Plus, because strength also increases bone density, if a fall was to occur then there would be less of a risk for osteoporotic fractures.

Strength-training programs really payoff by improving our ability to stay more independent as we get older. Seniors who perform some sort of organized strength-training program often report feeling more confident getting around the house and their communities. Words and phrases like “I couldn’t” or “I can’t”



Stay Healthy

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or “Slow down I not as young as I use to be” often become phrase like “I can” and “Let me do It.” or “Pick up the pace, I got things to do.” The important thing is that strength training can make us feel better about ourselves and make the golden years more golden.

To get started on a strength training program may require a little homework. In our senior years we are often faced with complex medical histories. Thus, it is important that anyone starting a strength-training program consult with their doctor to see if there any special precautions or adaptations that you may need to make your program safe. Your doctor or another health care professional may even be able to help

you get started.

Getting started can also be as easy as using a few things around the house. To strengthen your legs stand over a chair and then stand up and sit down 10 to 30 times in a row. If you need to, you can use your arms to help, but then your legs will get less of a workout. For the arms, you can go to your local grocery and get a big can of beans on sale and use them as weights for arm curls, again doing 10 to 30 repetitions in a row. These are just a few examples of how simple it can be. If this doesn’t appeal to you or if you want to have more help or check around your community for programs that might be available. If you are unsure ask around about local fitness experts that could help you get started. Just make sure the expert in question is well educated on your personal medical background, so that your program will be safe and fun. Check with public health or your local senior center, ask what programs may be available or in the works. The important thing is to get started.

Get educated, get health smart, and live longer and happier.